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Vol. II

Record Reviews for January, 1939

No. 1

BY R. D. DARRELL

Auric: *Impromptus in E major & G major*. Jacques Février (piano). **Honegger:** *Petite Suite en trois parties*. L'Homme (saxophone), Manuel (piano), M. & L. Moyse (flutes), Locatelli (violin), Hamelin (clarinet). 2 sides, 10" imported disc, No. CDM-519, price \$1.50.

This is the first of a batch of new records we have just received from the recently formed *Chant du Monde* Company of Paris, that — judging from its inaugural releases — apparently intends to specialize in folk music and the smaller works of contemporary French composers. Here we have a couple of innocently rambling piano pieces by Auric (who has been very poorly represented on discs heretofore), and the first recording of a miniature suite by Honegger, a quite recent work, I should imagine, for I have not seen it included in any published lists of his compositions. It's inconsequential but charmingly lyric music and the varied tone colors of the fine French soloists who play it are admirably captured in the transparent recording.

J. C. Bach: *Concerto in C major—Rondo*. See odd-side of Mozart: *Concerto No. 1 in F major*.

J. S. Bach: *Chromatic Fantasia & Fugue in D minor*. See under Collections (Kirkpatrick Album)

BEETHOVEN

Beethoven: *Quartet (Piano and Strings) in E flat major* (arr. Beethoven from the Wood Wind Quintet, Op. 16) (7 sides). E. Robert Schmitz (piano) & Members of Roth Quartet. **Haydn:** *Quartet (Strings) in D major, Op. 76, No. 5—Minuet*. Roth Quartet (1 side). 4-12" discs, Nos. C-69387/90D, in Set CM-348, price complete with album \$6.00 (Parcel Post prepaid to any part of the U.S.A.).

The early Op. 16 Quintet, written around 1796 for piano, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, and horn, was arranged by Beethoven as a string quartet, Op. 75, and also—according to

Ries—as a piano quartet. The original version has been recorded several times, but never too well, and the present first recording of the piano quartet arrangement is the first set that is fully satisfactory both technically and as a performance. The work itself, while hardly profound, is a highly ingratiating example of Beethoven's early style and in this transcription gains in expressiveness more than it loses in color and piquancy with the absence of the wind instruments. The florid piano part, retained intact from the original version, provides an excellent vehicle for Schmitz's delicately controlled virtuosity, and the recording of both piano and ensemble is first-rate.

Beethoven: *Der Abschied (La Partenza)*. Grove's No. 236 & *Der Kuss*, Op. 128; **Telemann:** *Die rechte Stimmung, Wechsel, & Glück*. Ernst Wolff (baritone, German) singing to his own piano accompaniments. 2 sides, 10" disc, No. C-4210M, price \$1.00.

A curious little record, done in Wolff's familiar informal style, of five hitherto unrecorded songs, two by Beethoven (one of which is best-known in its original Italian version) and no less than three by Telemann, whose prodigious output has previously been represented only by instrumental and church works. I suspect that Telemann airs have been arranged a bit (one would never imagine they date from the early eighteenth century), but they are pleasantly gay and folkish in spirit.

Bizet: *Carmen—Habañera, Act I & Chanson bohème, Act II*. Ninon Vallin (soprano, in French) with Chorus & Orchestra conducted by G. Andolfi. 2 sides, 12" disc, No. C-P9152M, price \$1.50.

Mme. Vallin has made several recordings of each of these familiar airs for both Odeon-Decca and Pathé, but those on this disc are her latest and best, which is to say, of

course, that this is one of the finest modern *Carmen* discs. Andolfi's crisp, cleanly recorded accompaniments and the use of the chorus usually omitted in isolated records of the *Habañera* add to the merits of an outstanding vocal release.

Bortniansky: Hymn of the Cherubims for Lent & Savadsky: Pater Noster. Russian Cathedral at Paris Choir (unacc., in Russian) conducted by N. Afonsky. 2 sides, 10" imported disc, No. G-K8154, price \$1.50.

The Bortniansky chorus is not the popular *Hymn of the Cherubims* No. 7 (recorded by the same choir on G-L1005 and reviewed last November), but it is written and sung in much the same grave, expressively devotional style. The Savadsky *Pater Noster*, featuring a soprano soloist, A. Zakharoff, is more fervent and exotically "Russian" in character, and both works give rich opportunity to the resonant organ-tones of the deep basses that are largely responsible for the distinctive individuality of Afonsky's fine choir. The recording is excellent.

BRAHMS

Brahms: Song Society. Vol. 1. Alexander Kipnis (bass, in German) with piano accompaniments by Gerald Moore. 12 sides, 6-12" discs, Nos. V-14306/11, in Set VM-522, price complete with album \$12.00 (Parcel Post prepaid to any part of the U.S.A.).

Von ewiger Liebe, Op. 43, No. 1 & *Erinnerung*, Op. 63, No. 2 (V-14306)

Denn es gehet (Vier ernste Gesänge), Op. 120, No. 1 & *Die Mainacht*, Op. 43, No. 2 (V-14307)

Ich wandte (V. e. G.), Op. 120, No. 2; *Ein Sonett*, Op. 14, No. 4 & *Sonntag*, Op. 47, No. 3 (V-14308)

O Tod (V. e. G.), Op. 120, No. 3 & *O wüsst' ich doch den Weg zurück*, Op. 63, No. 8 (V-14309)

Wenn ich mit Menschen (V. e. G.), Op. 120, No. 4; *Ständchen*, Op. 106, No. 1 & *Vergebliches Ständchen*, Op. 84, No. 4 (V-14310)

Verrat, Op. 105, No. 5 & *An die Nachtigall*, Op. 46, No. 4 (V-14311)

The Brahms Song Society seems unable to progress beyond its first volume, issued — under unusual restrictions — in December, 1936. Out-of-print for some time, it now reappears as a regular release, but still, unfortunately, with the same irritating distribution of selections that puts the four *Serious Songs* on four different discs instead of on consecutive sides of two discs. I yield to none in admiration of Kipnis's great vocal and interpretative talents, but I have never thought that these records do him full justice. There are some memorable moments here, but there are many others when Kipnis's voice is not as his best or its character is altered by the recording. And the fine piano accompaniments are either too discreetly played or relegated by the microphone to too distant a background. No *Lieder* connoisseur can afford to ignore this set, of course, but I'm

afraid that few admirers of Brahms and Kipnis will feel that either man is fully satisfactorily represented here.

Chabrier: Cotillon-Ballet. London Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Antal Dorati, 4 sides, 2-12" discs, Nos. C-69337/8D, in Set CM-X113, price complete with album \$3.25.

Menuet Pompeux—"La Toilette" (orch. Rieti) & *Scherzo-Valse*—"Danse des Chapeaux" (C-69337D)

Idylle—"Les Mains du Destin" & *Danse Villageoise*—"Grand Rond et Final" (C-69338D)

Cotillon, with Balanchine's choreography, is one of the best-liked recent additions to the repertory of the Ballet Russe. The music is drawn from Chabrier's *Dix Pièces Pittoresques* written originally for piano. Some, I think, were orchestrated by the composer; at any rate, only the *Menuet Pompeux* here specifies an orchestrator—Rieti; the others bear Chabrier's name only. The pieces used in the ballet are respectively Nos. 9, 10, 6, and 7 of the original piano set, and three of these have been available in previous recordings: the *Danse* (or *Ronde*) *Villageoise* conducted by Pierné (D-25313), the *Scherzo-Valse* conducted by Wolff (PD-66995), and the *Idylle* in the original piano version by Passani (PD-522683) and Lazare-Lévy (G-DB5049). But all except the last disc date back a few years; the present set is distinguished by far brighter recording and more vivacious performances. *Cotillon* is a delightful musical *divertissement* in itself and a work that should do much to take the burden off *España* in representing Chabrier's blithe and sunny talent on discs.

Eric Coates: London Suite—Tarantelle "Covent Garden," Meditation "Westminster," & March "Knightsbridge." London Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Eric Coates, 2 sides, 12" disc, No. C-69399D, price \$1.50.

The most popular of all Eric Coates' light symphonic suites makes a delayed domestic appearance in the composer's own version, preceded by the Wood and Lewis performances (D-25582/3 & V-36129/30) and also by the sequel work, *London Again* (CM-X102, reviewed in the October 1938 *Record Supplement*). Here the first two movements are condensed to a half-side each, instead of the usual side (no great loss, for this sort of fluent writing is the tonal equivalent of yard goods), but the gay and highly celebrated march is given in full. The full-blooded performances and lusty recording are more notable for their high spirits than their delicacy or accuracy, but the main thing here is the rousing tunes and they are delivered with great bravura.

Cimarosa: Sonata in A major & Rameau: Gavotte Julio Martinez Oyanguren (guitar). 2 sides, 10" disc, No. C-17118D, price \$1.00.

The jaunty, artless Cimarosa piece is one of some thirty-two clavier sonatas, none of which has ever been recorded

before. I presume Sr. Oyanguren arranged both it and the Gavotte himself, but the labels have nothing to say about that, nor about the number of the sonata and the identity of the Rameau piece (the latter does not check with any of the other recorded Rameau Gavottes). Surely the artist, who plays with such deft command of tonal light and shade, should not deny us light on the origin of his material.

Couperin: Les Baricades mystérieuses, Le Carillon de Cithère, Les Ombres errantes, & Les Vergers fleuris. See under Collections (Kirkpatrick Album).

Davidovsky: Prayer of Saint Simeon & Pantchenko: Litany for the Dead. Russian Cathedral at Paris Choir (unacc., in Russian) conducted by N. Afonsky. 2 sides, 10" imported disc, No. G-K8153, price \$1.50.

Another pair of representative examples of the admirable Afonsky series of Russian liturgical recordings. Of the two less familiar composers of this school heard here, Davidovsky (with an overly lugubrious *Prayer*, featuring Mme. Pavlenko as soloist) comes off second best to Pantchenko (whose *Litany* is an extremely moving and attractive bit of choral writing).

Delibes: Coppélia Ballet—Danse des Automates, Valse lente, & Csardas. Boston "Pops" Orchestra conducted by Arthur Fiedler. 2 sides, 12" disc, No. V-12527, price \$1.50.

A typically alert and stylish "Pops" disc against which the only complaint that can be levelled is that everything is a little oversize. But for all the amplification, there is no coarseness of color or sonority, and these versions ably supersede Hertz's *Danse des Automates* and *Valse lente* on V-6586, and Goossens's *Csardas* on V-4257.

Dufay: Vergine Bella. See under Collections (Renaissance Music).

d'Erlanger: Les Cent Baisers—Ballet. London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Antal Dorati. 4 sides, 2-12" discs, Nos. V-12735/6, in Set VM-511, price complete with album \$3.50.

Opening Scherzo; Entry & Dance of the Princess; Ensemble & Lamento (Dance of the Prince)

Grand Valse; The Hundred Kisses; Entry of the King & Closing Scene

Les Cent Baisers, one of the minor Ballet Russe productions, dates from 1935. The choreography was devised in classical style by Bronislava Nijinska (sister of Nijinsky); the scenery and costumes were designed by Jean Hugo; the libretto is by Boris Kochno after Hans Christian Andersen's *The Princess and the Swineherd*. The composer—Baron Frédéric d'Erlanger—is a naturalized Englishman, born in Paris in 1868, who has dabbled in many musical forms, writing fluently, stylishly, and superficially. Better-known by his quasi-salon works (exemplified by *The Midnight Rose* recorded by Barbirolli on G-C2683) than by his operas (*Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, etc.), Erlanger is not to

be confused with Camille Erlanger (1863-1919), a pupil of Delibes, who wrote *Aphrodité* and other operas. The Baron's most ambitious work yet to be recorded, *The Hundred Kisses*, is typical of his melodious, facile, and undistinguished work, but it makes blandly effective ballet music, and is played and recorded here with appropriate sentiment and stylized grace.

GERSHWIN

An Album of George Gershwin Music. Paul Whiteman and his Concert Orchestra; Roy Bargy & Rosa Linda (solo pianists). 10 sides, 5-12" discs, Nos. D-29051/5, in Set D-31, price complete with album \$5.50 (Parcel Post prepaid to any part of the U.S.A.).

Rhapsody in Blue (D-29051)

Second Rhapsody (D-29052)

Cuban Overture (3 sides, D-29053/4)

An American in Paris (3 sides, D-29054/5)

I got pretty irate about the Victor Gershwin Memorial Album (VM-C29) in these pages last October, and it is particularly pleasant to be able to say that the present set not only takes the bad taste of the earlier release out of one's mouth, but makes a significant contribution to recorded Gershwiniana. There is no "memorial" sloppiness about the album and the selections are admirably chosen to represent Gershwin's major symphonic essays. Some condensations have been made in most if not all the works, but they're all to the good, and the performances are remarkably clean, straightforward, and vital. The Sanroma-Fiedler three-sided version of the *Rhapsody in Blue* (VM-353) remains the best all-round recorded performance, but the first disc in the present set is by far the best two-sided version. Whiteman's *An American in Paris* gives the older Shilkret reading (V-35963/4) a good run for its money, but the real features of the album are the strangely neglected (and hitherto unrecorded) *Second Rhapsody* and *Cuban Overture*, the former with Roy Bargy—who also plays the solo piano in the *Rhapsody*—and the latter with the equally skillful and spirited Rosa Linda. The *Second Rhapsody* contains some interesting writing, but it suffers the handicap of most sequels; it is the *Overture* that stands the best chance of ever rivalling the popularity of the *Rhapsody in Blue*: in many ways it is a finer work, and—in this intoxicatingly rhythmed performance—it stands as a worthy monument to the lively art of George Gershwin.

Gibbons: The Lord of Salisbury—His Pavin & The Queen's Command. See under Collections (Kirkpatrick Album).

Giordano: Andrea Chénier—Opera in 4 Acts. Complete Recording in Italian. 26 sides, 13-12" discs, Nos. C-69361/73D, in Opera Set CM-21, price complete with 2 albums & libretto \$19.50 (Parcel Post prepaid to any part of the U.S.A.).

The Cast

Andrea Chénier.....	Luigi Marini
Carlo Gerard.....	Carlo Galeffi
Maddalena di Coigny.....	Lina Bruna Rasa
Contessa di Coigny }	Anna Masette Bassi
Maddelon	
Bersi	Ida Conti
Roucher }	Salvatore Baccaloni
Fouquer Tinville }	
Mathieu }	Aristide Baracchi
Il Romanziere }	
L'Abate & Spy.....	Giuseppe Nessi
Schmidt, Dumas, etc.....	Natale Villa
La Scala Chorus and Orchestra	
Conductor	Lorenzo Molajoli

Like the Columbia Operatic Set of *Lucia di Lammermoor*, reviewed in the October 1938 *Record Supplement*, *Andrea Chénier* was recorded some seven or eight years ago, but has been in such demand in imported pressings that it could no longer be refused domestic release. This work too is nicely put out, not only with an accompanying libretto, but also a handy guide to the point in the libretto where each record-side begins, but again both singing and recording are coarse and over-vehement. However, the whole performance is marked by tremendous vigor and enthusiasm and I dare say it compares favorably enough most run-of-the-mill stage presentations.

Haydn: Quartet (Strings) in D major, Op. 76, No. 5—Minuet. See odd-side of **Beethoven: Quartet in E flat major.**

Hindemith: Quartet (Strings) No. 3, Op. 22. The Coolidge Quartet, 6 sides, 3-12" discs, Nos. V-15238/40, in Set VM-524, price complete with album \$6.50 (Parcel Post prepaid to any part of the U.S.A.).

It is curious that this highly "modern" work, one of the few examples of atonality that has been brought to discs, comes to many collectors not so much as a startling novelty as the renewal of an old acquaintance. It was originally recorded, by the Amar-Hindemith Quartet, toward the end of the acoustic era (PD-66198/200*) and very shortly after as one of the first of the electrical products (PD-66422/4). Both versions of course have been out-of-print for years and it is good to have the work back in the active gramophonic repertory. The "atonal" should not be taken too literally: I think Hindemith's music here is much more polytonal than it is atonal; at any rate, it has none of the icy, inhuman, and almost incomprehensible qualities of—say—some of Schönberg's essays in pure chromaticism. Its saucy high spirits and rhythmic energy, to say nothing of its moments of genuine lyrical expressiveness, make it an uncommonly appealing example of contemporary chamber writing, and only the most obstinate and unrelenting of conservatives will be able to deny its virility and attractiveness.

I think this is the first gramophonic appearance of the Coolidge Quartet (William Kroll, Nicolai Berezowsky, Nicolas Modavan, Victor Gottlieb); if so, it is a most felicitous debut—in choice of selection, cleanly vigorous recording, and bright and assured performance.

Honegger: Petite Suite en trois parties. See reverse-side of **Auric: Impromptus.**

Humperdinck: Hänsel und Gretel—Ein Männlein steht im Walde & Der kleine Sandmann bin ich (solos); Abendsegen (duo) Act II. Elisabeth Schumann (soprano, in German) with piano accompaniments by Ernest Lush, 2 sides, 10" disc, No. V-1948, price \$1.50.

This charming little record of the *Folk Song, Sandman's Lullaby*, and *Evening Prayer* (in which a bit of trick recording enables Mme. Schumann to sing both Hänsel's and Gretel's parts) first appeared abroad some three years ago, but it still sounds as delightful as ever on its delayed American release. The only criticism that can be made of it is that a piano was substituted for the orchestra in the accompaniment, but Mr. Lush plays so discreetly and Mme. Schumann sings so persuasively that one scarcely notices that the orchestra is missing.

Ibert: Entr'acte. Marcel Moyse (flute) & Jean Lafon (guitar). **Sauveplane: Habañera.** Roland Charmy (violin) & Jean Manuel (piano). 2 sides, 10" imported disc, No. CdM-518, price \$1.50.

Two more first recordings from *Le Chant du Monde*: the Ibert piece is a singular one, both in its instrumentation and the rhapsodic writing in the style of—if not based directly on—very ancient folk dances. It has a remarkable fascination that quite overshadows the graceful and melodious little *Habañera*, the first recorded example, I think, of the original works of Henri Sauveplane (1892-), often represented before by arrangements or folk settings.

Isaac: Der Hundt. See under **Collections (Renaissance Music).**

Lapicidia: Zu Andernach am Rheine. See under **Collections (Renaissance Music).**

Leoncavallo: I Pagliacci—Prologo. Igor Gorin (baritone, in Italian) with Orchestra conducted by Wilfred Pelletier. 2 sides, 10" disc, No. V-4409, price \$1.00.

Tibbett's (V-6587) is probably the best-selling version of the Prologue to *I Pagliacci*, but neither it nor any of the some thirty or forty other discs ever comes up to the old Ruffo performance (V-6405*), now unfortunately withdrawn. The present version gives us a magnificently robust voice, heard for the first time on records in worthy musical material, but although Gorin makes an obvious effort to escape his usual affectations, he lacks an authentic sense of style and delivery. Nevertheless, there is some impressive singing here, deserving a more effective accompaniment than a thin studio substitute for a full orchestra.

Liszt: Légende No. 2, Saint Francois de Paule marchant sur les flots. Alfred Cortot (piano). 2 sides, 12" disc, No. V-15245, price \$2.00.

The newest version of the second *Légende* and probably the best from the point of view of recording, but Cortot's reading does not come up to the fine Ciampi performance (C-68591D). And why doesn't Cortot, or someone, ever give us the unrecorded first *Légende* that paints St. Francis d'Assise preaching to the birds?

Massenet: Phèdre Overture. Grand Orchestre Symphonique conducted by G. Andolfi. 2 sides, 12" disc, No. C-P69305D, price \$1.50.

A domestic re-pressing of PAT-PGT22 and a badly needed replacement of the old Hertz version (V-7154) by which the Overture to Racine's tragedy, *Phèdre*, has long been exclusively represented in the American catalogues. (I haven't heard the new Schmidt-Isserstedt performance on T-E2399.) Massenet's music is a singular hodge-podge of theatrics, sentimentality, and rowdy circus atmosphere, but Andolfi plays it with as straight a face as possible and is given vigorous recording.

Mendelssohn: The Hebrides (Fingal's Cave) Overture, Op. 26. London Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Sir Thomas Beecham. 2 sides, 12" disc, No. C-69400D, price \$1.50.

Beecham's is about the twelfth electrical recording of this popular overture, a work that never becomes hackneyed, on the contrary grows in stature with every hearing as one of Mendelssohn's happiest and most effective creations. The present performance is more restrained and subtle than most, but it is superbly poetic and finished in every rhythmic detail and nuance of color. After the stormy seas of Wagner's *Flying Dutchman* Overture (reviewed last month), Beecham turns with equally sensitive skill and sound taste to this quieter seascape, and again excels every gramophonic edition that has been available before.

Milhaud: Suite Provençale. Grand Orchestre (Paris) conducted by Roger Desormière. 4 sides, 2-12" imported discs, Nos. Cdm-516/7, price \$4.00 the pair.

Le Chant du Monde's most ambitious release and an exceedingly curious work. As the discs came in just before these reviews were due at the printer's I am unable to supply any information about the Suite itself, for it is not mentioned in any immediately available reference books. Obviously it is an invocation of the Provençale region and is written in uncompromising unadorned folk style, possibly making use of actual folk material. There are lyric sections, but the principal characteristic of the suite are its obstinate, driving rhythms and shrill, reedy and brassy scoring, apparently devised in imitation of peasant brass and pipe bands. A good many stretches of the music are pretty strenuous on one's ears, but there is an irresistible energy here and moments of acrid but genuine beauty. Not one

of Milhaud's greatest works, it certainly is one of his most singular and distinctive compositions. Desormière, his orchestra, and the recording engineer (particularly the latter) are given some tough problems, but they are faced and—if not overcome—at least met bravely.

Morley: Goe from my window. See under Collections (Kirkpatrick Album).

MOZART

Mozart: Concerto (Harpichord and Orchestra) No. 1 in F major, K. 37 (3 sides) & Johann Christian Bach: Concerto in C major—Rondo. Marguerite Roesgen-Champion & Orchestre Symphonique of Paris conducted by M. F. Gaillard. 2-12" discs, Nos. C-P69396/7D, in Set CM-X114, price complete with album \$3.25.

The first four Mozart concertos (K. 27, 39, 40, and 41, all dating from the composer's eleventh year, 1767) are not wholly original works, but synthetic concertos that he arranged from sonatas by various composers. In the present case, the Köchel Verzeichnis attributes the opening Allegro to H. F. Raupach and the final Rondo to L. Honauer; the composer of the Andante movement is unknown, but Johann Schobert is thought by some authorities to have written it. But for all this, the flavor is decidedly early Mozartian: everything is on a miniature scale except for the profusion of gay tunes and innocent flourishes, and the performance and recording are discreetly restrained in keeping with that scale. The last side gives a sprightly little encore, very much in the same style, except that here the music is signed by the "London Bach," Johann Christian, whose works played a strong influence on Mozart in his early years. We had this set a year or two ago in the imported pressings (PAT-PGT24/5), but it sounds more infectious than ever on re-hearing and makes a delectable addition to the domestic Mozart repertory.

Mozart: La Clemenza di Tito, K. 621—Overture & La Finta Giardiniera, K. 196—Overture. Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Bruno Walter. 2 sides, 12" disc, No. V-12526, price \$1.50.

A neat brace of unfamiliar overtures: one to an opera buffa of 1774/5, *La Finta Giardiniera* or *Die Gärtnerin aus Liebe*; the other to an opera seria of 1791, *La Clemenza di Tito* or *Titus*. It's hardly surprising that the former has never been recorded before, for there's very little to it save an air of high spirits. Some authorities believe a short slow movement should follow the brief Allegro, but the Köchel Verzeichnis seems to give no support to this notion . . . a pity, for plenty of blank space on the record side remains open for it. *Titus* is far more characteristic in style; a good work and welcome in a modern recording supplanting the oldish Horenstein version on PD-516614. Bruno Walter's Mozart is seldom top-notch, but these short overtures give him little opportunity to relax and sentimentalize, and in consequence they rank easily as his most delightful and successful Mozartian ventures.

Mozart: Serenata Notturmo in D major, K. 239. Orchestre de la Société des Concerts du Conservatoire conducted by Edvard Fendler. 2 sides, 12" imported disc, No. BAM-23, price \$2.00.

The Sixth Serenade, or *Serenata Notturmo*, was done a couple of years ago by the Boyd Neel Orchestra (D-25623/4), but in a rather easy-going performance and somewhat dull recording. Here M. Fendler attacks it with great verve and in given remarkably crisp and spirited technical support. His more zestful tempos enable him to get the first two movements, *Marcia* and *Menuetto* on one instead of two record sides, but even the convenience of a single disc version is overshadowed by the notable vivacity and brilliance of this performance. (The December issue of *Disques*, just received from Paris, announces that this disc is awarded a *Candide Grand Prix* for 1938.)

Pantchenko: Litany for the Dead. See reverse-side of Davidovsky: *Prayer of Saint Simeon*.

Pizzetti: Tre Canti—No. 1 (Affettuoso) & Szymanowsky: Tarantelle (Presto Appassionato), Op. 28, No. 2. Nathan Milstein (violin) & Leopold Mittmann (piano). 2 sides, 12" disc, No. C-69398D, price \$1.50.

The *Tre Canti ad una giovane fidanzata* were once recorded in their entirety by Poltronieri and the composer (C-D14556/7); here we have the expressive first piece, with its Italianate echoes of the Franck violin sonata, a gracious air strongly contrasted with the frenetic Szymanowsky *Tarantelle* on the other side (recorded before, with its companion *Notturmo*, by Menuhin on V-14383). Milstein fiddles in bravura style, dexterously, flashily, but with little real conviction or warmth.

Purcell: Harpsichord Suites Nos. 1 & 2, and Lilliburlero. See under Collections (Kirkpatrick Album).

Rameau: Gavotte. See reverse-side of Cimaroso: *Sonata in A*.

Rameau: Musette en Rondeau, Le Rappel des Oiseaux, Rigaudons, Tambourin, La Villageoise. See under Collections (Kirkpatrick Album).

Rossini: La Scala di Seta—Overture. B.B.C. Symphony Orchestra conducted by Arturo Toscanini. 2 sides, 12" disc, No. V-15191, price \$2.00.

Ordinarily Toscanini is quite incomparable in Rossini overtures, but this lusty example doesn't quite come off like *L'Italiana in Algeri*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, or *Semiramide*, partly because the treatment here is too high-powered for such a rollicking tonal gambol, but mostly because the work was once recorded by Beecham (C-9077M). The rougher-surfaced Beecham disc has far less technical merit, but its glorious jauntness, piquant color, and spaciousness made it a record never to be forgotten or rivalled. Anyone unfam-

iliar with the Beecham version is sure to prize Toscanini's highly, but I strongly doubt that I'll be the only one to cling steadfastly to the older record. (But then it would be assured a safe place in many collections if only for the fill-up on the second side, the superb *Entrance of the Queen of Sheba* from Handel's *Solomon*.)

Sarasate: Zigeunerweisen, Op. 20, No. 1. Jascha Heifetz (violin) & London Symphony Orchestra conducted by John Barbirolli. 2 sides, 12" disc, No. V-15246, price \$2.00.

Reviewed from the imported pressing (G-DB3212), November 1937 *Record Supplement*, in words that still hold good: Scores of fiddlers have recorded this perennial virtuoso piece, but they need labor no more. Heifetz and Barbirolli have said the last word and said it matchlessly.

Sauveplane: Habanera. See reverse-side of Ibert: *Entr'acte*.

Savinsky: Pater Noster. See reverse-side of Bortniansky: *Hymn of the Cherubims for Lent*.

D. Scarlatti: Sonatas in D major, L. 262 & A minor, L. 429. See under Collections (Kirkpatrick Album).

Schubert: Frühlingstraum (Die Winterreise No. 11) & Gretchen am Spinnrade, Op. 2. Hertha Glatz (alto, in German) with piano accompaniments by Franz Rupp. 2 sides, 12" disc, No. V-15247, price \$2.00.

Mme. Glatz's name is a new one to records and to me. She makes a fairly good impression in the *Winterreise* song and promptly proceeds to spoil it by her far more constrained and jumpy singing in *Gretchen am Spinnrade*. The accompaniments and recording are first-rate, but judgment must be reserved on Mme. Glatz.

Schubert: Sei mir gegrüsst, Op. 20, No. 1 & Ständchen (Schwanengesang No. 4). Heinrich Schlusnus (baritone, in German) with piano accompaniments by Sebastian Peschko. 2 sides, 12" imported disc, No. PD-67181, price \$2.50.

Here we have a familiar name and one that calls for no reservations. Schlusnus is in splendid voice and this is one of the best of his recent recordings, superseding earlier versions of the same *Lieder* on PD-66611.

SCHUMANN

Schumann: Concerto (Piano and Orchestra) in A minor, Op. 54. Myra Hess & Symphony Orchestra conducted by Walter Goehr. 8 sides, 4-12" discs, Nos. V-12280/3, in Set VM-473, price complete with album \$6.50 (Parcel Post prepaid to any part of the U. S. A.).

The logical salutation for this set is an impatient "About time!", which applies comprehensively to an up-to-date recording of the Schumann Concerto, to the internationally

admired Myra Hess reading of that work, and finally to the domestic release of her discs—available abroad for over a year. Everyone who knows the playing of Myra Hess, in this concerto and everything else, will need no prodding from me to hear and own this album. All that I need say is that Miss Hess is in top form and that she's given good, clean accompaniment and recording—like her own characteristic talents, nothing sensational, but distinctively warm, straightforward, and honest. The set could stand much sterner competition than it's offered: the only other versions to be considered are Cortot's (VM-39, dating from 1934) and Nat's (CM-196, going back to 1933); and neither was ever completely satisfactory. The Hess edition is likely to remain definitive for a long time to come.

Smetana: The Moldau (Vltava) & From Bohemia's Meadows and Forests (Symphonic Poems Nos. 2 & 4 from the Cycle "Má Vlast," 3 sides each). Czech Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Rafael Kubelik. 3-12" discs, Nos. V-12520/2, in Set VM-523, price complete with album \$5.00 (Parcel Post prepaid to any part of the U.S.A.).

With other Smetana devotees I always regret that *The Moldau* and *The Bartered Bride*—superb works though they are—have so completely overshadowed the great Czech pioneer's other music. But since they are so popular, at least they should be heard in good authentic performances. The opera has been available on records for some time in such a version (VM-193, a set I never weary of hearing or praising), but curiously enough there never has been a first-rate gramophonic edition of the symphonic poem; that is, until the present discs came along. They're a little on the robust side, both in playing and recording, but the true feeling and spirit are there and in rich abundance. And best of all the layman who knows *The Moldau* and wants these discs is almost forced to get another and far less familiar work from the same cycle, *My Country*. He won't regret it: *From Bohemia's Meadows and Forests* is another of those incomparable blends of rusticity and tenderness, of pure nationalistic fervor and international appeal so characteristic of Smetana's best work.

The conductor, by the way, is the son of the great violinist, Jan Kubelik, and obviously—by the testimony of this album—an important musician in his own right. I hope that he has, or will, go on to record the rest of the *Má Vlast* cycle, done quite a few years ago by Talich (G-AN386/95), but badly in need of such full-blooded technical presentation such as Kubelik's performances are given here.

Sousa: Ten Marches. American Legion Band, Hollywood, California, conducted by Joe Colling. 10 sides, 5-10" discs in Set D-22, price complete with album \$2.25.

The Stars and Stripes Forever & Hail to the Spirit of Liberty

Washington Post & Hands Across the Sea

**Semper Fidelis & The Thunderer
High School Cadets & Liberty Bell
King Cotton & El Capitan**

Decca's handsome little album series, that grows faster than one can keep up with it and seems intent on touching on every possible phase of popular and light music, stops here to pay a tribute to the American genius who gave us some of our most characteristic tunes and the world its finest marches. More praise must go to the album itself than to the vigorous, but strictly routine performances, but at least they are good and loud, which is all that most of this set's public will demand.

RICHARD STRAUSS

Strauss: Symphonia Domestica, Op. 53. Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Eugene Ormandy. 10 sides, 5-12" discs, Nos. V-15225/9, in Set VM-520, price complete with album \$10.00 (Parcel Post prepaid to any part of the U. S. A.).

The *Domestic Symphony*, for all its fame (perhaps notoriety is the better word), was cursed with tardiness from its birth. It came a little late in Strauss's own creative career, when his taste if not his powers were on a decline; it came late in the reign of the descriptive symphonic poem, when the public was already a little weary of such elaborate programmatic writing; finally, it comes consistently late to records, one of the last of Strauss's major symphonic works to be set on discs. The sensational echoes of its first appearance in concert (in New York, under the composer's own direction, in March 1904), have long since died away, but they still make fascinating reading in history books, and even at this late date the recorded version may make quite a hit for the same reason Newman cites in explanation of the original success of the work: "the simplicity of the subject—papa, momma and baby—brought the program, at any rate, within the scope of the intelligence of the average man. People who were puzzled almost to the point of insanity by Zarathustra and its *Uebermenschen*, and its *Genesende*, and all the rest of that queer fauna, could recognize at once when the baby was squealing in its bath or the lullaby was being sung over it; and they had a kindly fellow-feeling for the terrible musician who now seemed to be even such a one as themselves."

Perhaps. That's a good explanation for a *tour de force* success or momentary notoriety, but truly great music has to be backed up by more than that.

However, few are likely to assign high musical significance to the work. Its real interest lies in the homely program, the descriptive touches, and above all in the involved complexities of the orchestral texture itself. I have followed the new discs with the score and while the melodic ideas often seem like a caricature of Strauss's earlier writing, the intricate orchestration never ceases to fascinate and amaze. Some details are lost here, of course, but many are lost in concert performances; the marvel is that the

gramophone has been able to cope so brilliantly with the elaborate web of sonorities and colors—something it never could have done in earlier stages of recording technique. The main point is that the *Symphonia Domestica* is at last obtainable on records. Those who like to follow the comic strip adventures of the protagonists will find the informative accompanying leaflet (with thematic illustrations) a handy guide; those who love to wallow in tumultuous waves of sheer sound may do so here to their heart's content; more philosophical listeners may find it an absorbing study in the degeneration of the genius that once gave us *Till Eulenspiegel*.

Strauss: Ich trage meine Minne. See reverse-side of **Wolf: Gebet.**

Szymanowski: Tarantella. See reverse-side of **Pizzetti: Affettuoso.**

TAYLOR

Taylor: Through the Looking Glass Suite. Columbia Symphony Orchestra conducted by Howard Barlow. Recorded under the personal supervision of the composer. 8 sides, 4-12" discs, Nos. C-11127/30D, in Set CM-350, price complete with album \$8.00 (Parcel Post prepaid to any part of the U. S. A.).

This is a great month for "at long last," besides the Strauss *Symphonia* above we also get Mr. Taylor's Suite, demanded on discs since the first days of symphonic recording. The work has long been a favorite in concert and now should win an even wider public, particularly in school, "appreciation," and music club circles. As music it doesn't interest me greatly: a deft blend of Strauss, Elgar, and Ravel, it contains some effective writing and easy listening without ever coming near the delicacy of fantasy of say a Roussel *Festin de l'Araignée* or Ravel *Ma Mère de l'Oye*, or the humor and high spirits of a *Till Eulenspiegel*. But the set is important for extra-musical considerations: as the first really successful domestic symphonic recording by the Columbia Company and as the first recording of one of our most talented native conductors, Howard Barlow. In both cases, the present album is hopefully only the first of a long series. The recording was done at *Liederkrantz Hall*, where Mr. Barlow does most of his C. B. S. broadcasts, and unlike the recent Wallenstein releases there is plenty of natural room spaciousness. The orchestra is first-rate (as anyone who has heard it on the air knows) and under Barlow's alert and sensitive baton it is heard in top form, with perhaps special honors going to the superb wood wind choir (the bassoonist has a starred rôle, and even that lumbering leviathan of the orchestra, the double bassoon, for once plays a featured part). My only criticism is an occasional tendency to over-monitoring—especially noticeable on the last record-side; otherwise this is a set of which Columbia may well be proud and which promises

well for its future symphonic essays and for the many Barlow performances which have too long been denied to the gramophonic repertory.

Tchaikovsky: The Swan Lake Ballet—Excerpts, Op. 20.

London Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Antal Dorati. 8 sides, 4-12" discs, Nos. C-69357/60D, in Set CM-349, price complete with album \$6.00 (Parcel Post prepaid to any part of the U. S. A.).

Instead of listing the contents of this set only, it may be most helpful to outline (with acknowledgement to a similar outline in the October 1938 issue of the *British Gramophone*) the entire recorded representation of the ballet available in the present discs and the previously released records, also by the London Philharmonic, conducted by Eugene Goossens (V-11666/7) and Efrem Kurtz (C-69080D). Reference to the present set is by side numbers only.

Act I: No. 1, Introduction (Side 1); No. 2 (4), Dance of the Prince (Side 3); No. 4, Waltz in A—Corps de Ballet (V-11666, side 2). **Act II:** No. 9, Introduction Scene (V-11666, Side 1); No. 12, Dance of the Swans—Waltz in A (C-69080D); No. 13, Dance of Queen of Swans (Side 2); No. 14, Dance of Little Swans (Side 5); Nos. 16 & 17, Scene & Coda (Side 3). **Act III:** No. 20, Scene & Waltz in A flat (Side 4); No. 22, Spanish Dance (Side 5); No. 24, Hungarian Dance—Czardas (V-11667, Side 2); No. 25, Mazurka in G (Side 6). **Act IV:** No. 31, Dance of Cygnets (Side 7); No. 33, Final Scene (Side 8).

As everyone knows who has seen the ballet, *The Swan Lake* is old-fashioned in every respect, but though that applies to the music as well, it is sufficiently varied and melodious to account for the main interest of the work. And it certainly sounds infinitely better here, in Dorati's vivacious recorded performance, than it ever does in stage productions.

Telemann: Die rechte Stimmung, Wechsel, Glück. See reverse-side of **Beethoven: Der Abschied & Der Kuss.**

de la Torre: Spanish Dance. See under **Collections (Renaissance Music).**

Weber: Oberon—Ozean, du Ungeheuer, Act II. Kirsten Flagstad (soprano, in German) with the Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Eugene Ormandy. 2 sides, 12" disc, No. V-15244, price \$2.00.

There isn't a really good modern recording of the great *Ocean, thou mighty monster!*, so Mme. Flagstad, with the brilliant support of the Philadelphians and Victor's engineers, has no difficulty in running off with top honors. But though her reading is more personal and dramatic than that of the recent Leonora's Aria from *Fidelio*, the amplification is not excessive, and the sure-handed accom-

paniment is beautifully recorded, the voice here is still not quite that of Flagstad in the concert hall and on the opera stage. Definite progress is being made, but she still presents the gramophone with an unsolved problem.

Wolf: Gebet & R. Strauss: Ich trage meine Minne, Op. 32, No. 1 (PD-62784). **Wolf: Ständchen & Storchensbotschaft (PD-30028).** Heinrich Schlusnus (baritone, in German) with piano accompaniments by Sebastian Peschko. 2-10" imported discs, price \$2.00 each.

In the midst of remaking many of his older *Lieder* records Schlusnus has found time to add four new songs to his gramophonic repertory, singing each with admirable restraint, clarity, and attractive tonal color. Recording and accompaniments are similarly excellent.

COLLECTIONS

A Harpsichord Recital by Ralph Kirkpatrick (Dolmetsch harpsichord). 6-12" discs, Nos. MC-1087/92, in Set MC-25, price complete with album \$9.00 (Parcel Post prepaid to any part of the U. S. A.).

Gibbons: The Lord of Salisbury—His Pavin & The Queen's Command; Morley: Goe from my Window (MC-1087)

Purcell: Suite No. 1 in G major, Suite No. 2 in G minor, & Lilliburlero (MC-1088)

Couperin: Les Baricades mystérieuses, Le Carillon de Cithère, Les Ombres errantes, & Les Vergers fleuris (MC-1089)

Rameau: Musette en Rondeau, Le Rappel des Oiseaux, Rigaudons, Tambourin, & La Villageoise (MC-1090)

Bach: Chromatic Fantasia and Fugue in D minor (3 sides); D. Scarlatti: Sonatina in D major, L. 262 & Sonatina in A minor, L. 429 (MC-1091/2)

As I believe records should be reviewed as far as possible on the basis of their own self-presented evidence, I seldom make use of such background material relating to actual recording sessions as may happen to come my way. But the quality of recorded harpsichord tone in this set is so extraordinarily fine, and so far superior to that of any previous discs, that perhaps my praise may be given greater weight by a note on how it was accomplished. Kirkpatrick and Gordon Mercer, the Musicraft engineer, prefaced the actual recording of this album by many weeks of experimentation: test recording of every type of harpsichord tone and registration with all varieties of microphone placement and amplification control. The results speak convincingly for themselves, but unless one is closely familiar with the actual tonal qualities of the instrument, the authenticity of tone here can hardly be realized except by comparison with what has been generally accepted as the finest existing harpsichord recording, that given some of Mme. Landow-

ska's recent releases, I have always admired her Chromatic Fantasia and Fugue (in VM-323) in particular, but when it is played in direct conjunction with the new Kirkpatrick version, its merits are seen in truer perspective; they are still admirable, but they aren't even closely comparable to those of the Musicraft discs.

The technical exploits of this set are so remarkable that one is likely to neglect the no less notable, if far less sensational, musicianship displayed in every bar of Mr. Kirkpatrick's performances; a tendency that is strengthened by the size and comprehensive nature of the album, including too many and too highly differentiated works to permit detailed individual examination. My only criticism of an otherwise flawless set is the very comprehensiveness of what amounts to practically a historical survey of harpsichord literature. But such an album-survey has its place, especially as the inaugural release in an extensive series that will later cover the various periods represented here—and of course others—in smaller and more specialized sets and individual discs. The double significance of *A Harpsichord Recital by Ralph Kirkpatrick* is that it enables the "King of Instruments" to speak for the first time on records in its true accents and full eloquence; and that it provides a superb medium for one of the ablest and most craftsmanly of contemporary harpsichordists, one who never ignores or slights the toughest problems of technique and musicological research, and who never permits them to paralyze the inner spirit and vitality of the glorious music itself.

Renaissance Music. The Fiedel Trio: Franz Siedersbeck, Beatrice Dohme, Erich Wilke (mediaeval viols); with Konrad Lechner (recorder) & Ernst Konrad Haase (baritone). 4 sides, 2-10" imported discs, Nos. PD-10750/1, price \$4.00 the pair.

Heinrich Isaac: Der Hundt; Francesco de la Torre: Spanish Dance with Prelude; Anon., arr. Lechner: Provencale Dance

Guillaume Dufay: Vergine Bella & Erasmus Lapidia: Instrumental Setting of the Song "Zu Andernach am Rheine"

The fiddle (Ger. *Fidel* or *Fiedel*), now in idiomatic usage a popular term for the violin, was originally used for the instruments that later became known as viols. The Fiedel Trio is one of the best-known contemporary viol ensembles, specializing of course in old music. Its first recordings will be hailed with delight by many in this country as well as in Europe who have heard the group in concert, and they add some notable little items to the gradually expanding repertory of old music. Only the Dufay air (sung by Haase) has been recorded before. The Isaac piece and the accompaniment for Dufay *Vergine Bella* are for the trio alone; the others include Lechner's *blockflöte* or recorder. The recording is excellent and enough lively works are included to avoid the impression of monotony and lack of spirit too often associated with ancient music.

Christmas Carols of Many Lands. Vienna Choir Boys directed by Viktor Gomboz, 4-10" discs, Nos. V-1944/7, in Set VM-C32, price complete with album \$6.50 (Parcel Post prepaid to any part of the U. S. A.).

French & English: Angels we have heard (arr. Gomboz, in English) & **American Indian: Ayapol** (arr. Edw. Stuart, in English) (V-1944)

French: A minuit fut fait un reveil (arr. Gomboz) & **Portugal: Adeste Fideles** (arr. Gomboz, in Latin) (V-1945)

Tyrol: Weihnachtslied aus dem Vintschgau (arr. Edw. Stuart) & **Es hat sich halt eröffnet** (arr. Gomboz) (V-1946)

Franz Gruber: Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht & Silesia: Maria auf dem Berge (arr. Gomboz) (V-1947)

It was a pity this set was not received in time for review last month, but at least the records themselves came in plenty of time for pre-Christmas sale, and as one might expect were in lively demand. As an album of such seasonal interest and representing one of the most ancient organizations in music history (the Wiener Sängerknaben group was founded in 1498 and its rosters have included such names as those of Haydn and Schubert), one can hardly criticize it on straight musical grounds. It is sufficient to say that the youngsters sing with delightful spirit and childish charm, and they are quite well recorded (except for a low level but annoying background amplification rumble). An organ accompanies *Adeste Fideles* and *Maria auf dem Berge*; the other pieces are sung a cappella, and several feature soloists: Hans Schneider and Rudolf Rab, sopranos, and Hans Frank, alto.

FOLK MUSIC

Fourteen French Folk Songs for Children, Vol. 2.

Louis Chartier (baritone, in French) with instrumental accompaniments, 6 sides, 3-10" discs, Nos. D-23074/6, in Set D-24, price complete with album \$2.75.

The first volume in this series was reviewed in the April 1938 *Record Supplement*. Here M. Chartier sings straightforward, clearly enunciated versions of fourteen more songs and ditties, prefacing each with a few descriptive words in French, and the accompanying leaflet gives the French text of introductions and songs together with their English translations. Contents: *Meunier tu dors*, *Maman les p'tits bateaux*, *Il court le furet*, *La Mer' Michel*, *De Papa c'est l'anniversaire*, *En roulant ma boule*, *La bonne aventure*, *L'envers du ciel*, *La casquette au Père Bugeaud*, *Le chevalier du guet*, *J'ai du bon tabac*, *Marie trempe ton pain*, *Coucou*, and *Pour endormir*.

French Provincial Folk Songs in Modern Arrangements.

Yvonne Gouverné Chorus & Orchestra conducted by Roger Desormière. 6 sides, 3-10" imported discs, Nos. CdM-505/7, price \$4.50 the set (plain 3-pocket album 50c additional).

The Provinces and songs represented are: Lorraine, *En passant par la Lorraine* (arr. Koechlin); Languedoc, *Se canto* (arr. Milhaud); Provence, *Magali* (arr. Milhaud); Auvergne, *La bourrée d'Auvergne* (arr. Koechlin); Bretagne, *An hini goz*, "*La Vieille*" (arr. Koechlin); Savoie, *Le pauvre laboureur* (arr. Sauvelane); and Ile-de-France, *La fille du Maréchal de France* (arr. Koechlin).

I prefer folk songs, of any nation, sung in authentic versions and in genuine folk style, but good recorded examples are always difficult to trace (the best discs of French folk material are those issued by *Florilège*—produced by the makers of *L'Anthologie Sonore* in Paris—FS-101/6, price \$10.00 the set). But apart from the unadulterated real thing, frankly modern settings are usually preferable, certainly far more interesting than most so-called popular or traditional versions that are usually not popular or traditional at all. The settings here are reasonably straightforward and free from affectations and out-of-place intricacies; and they are sung, played, and recorded with robust spirit.

Hebrew Songs. David Putterman (tenor) & Choir (in Hebrew & English) with piano accompaniments, 6 sides, 3-10" discs, Nos. V-V9044/6, in Set VM-S102, price complete with album \$2.50.

B'rochos & Rock of Ages (Traditional), **Haneros Hallolu** (Goldfarb), **S'vivon** (Greenspan), **Kiddush Sholom Alechem** (Goldfarb), **The Sabbath Queen** (Minkowski), **Tsur Mishelo** (Traditional), **Eliychu** (Folk Song), **Ba-ah Menucha** (Samburski), **Mit Y'mallel** (Folk Song).

A badly needed recorded anthology of well-known Hebrew melodies including traditional songs for the Sabbath and for Chanukah; *Z'miros* (sung at the table after a festive meal), and modern Palestinian songs. Cantor Putterman (of the Park Avenue Synagogue, New York) has an expressive voice and a good sense of style for the various types of works given here. He is well recorded, but poorly supported by a rather shrill small chorus and overly discreet piano accompaniments.

Melodias Orientales. Anonymous Instrumental and Vocal Ensembles, 10 sides, 6-10" discs, Nos. V-82505/10, in Set VM-S14, price complete with album \$5.00.

An exotic dish indeed and somewhat bewildering, for no leaflet accompanies the set and the labels bear no information apart from the titles. However, they give a notion of what it's all about: *Shimmy Dance*, *Dance of the Hips*, *Harem Dance*, *Oriental Gypsy Dance*, *Arabian Girl*, *Oriental Round Up*, *Dance of the Hanim*, *Turkish Polka*, *Turkish Gypsy Dance*, *Vlaha the Roumanian Girl*, *Constantinople Dance*, and *Bosphorus Dance*. I should particularly like to know the names of the various native instruments employed, apparently in considerable variety. The music I presume to be popular rather than genuine folk stuff, but at any rate it is wildly rhapsodic and turned off with fiery gusto.

Persian Suite, Bayate Isphahan (arr. Hossein). Amin-oullah Hossein (tar) with tambourin. 2 sides, 10" imported disc, No. G-K7156, price \$1.50.

Re-listing one of the best available Persian recordings by a celebrated performer on the *Tar*, a kind of Oriental lute played with a plectrum.

Peruvian Indian (Inca) Melodies (Col. & Harn. Béclard d'Harcourt). Ninon Vallin (soprano, in Quichua & Spanish) with Le Roy (flute) & Jamet (harp). 4 sides, 2-10" discs, Nos. C-P4219/20M, price \$2.00 the pair.

Wasi-Wasinta (Abancay); Sancecito, Palma verde (Chonchucos); Harawi (Huanuco); Zas! (Cuzco)

Ama pisko mikunkicu (Cuzco); Tupucito l'Ata (Chonchucos); Mariposacay, Ninacay & Aa, Sumak (Central Peru); De aquel cerro verde (Huanuco)

With our South American neighbors and the recent Lima conference very much in the news, Columbia picks an apt time to re-press two of the finest available discs of Peruvian Indian music, available for some time—and highly prized by collectors—in imported Pathé pressings (PAT-PG37/8). The nine selections are listed above with the districts from which they come given in parentheses. Nos. 3 and 4 are for flute and harp only; Mme. Vallin sings the others,—Nos. 2 and 8 in Spanish, the rest in Quichua, the ancient Indian language. While the various songs are presented here in European harmonizations, Mme. d'Harcourt has set them with such sensitive lyric touch that whatever has been lost in aboriginal vigor is surely more than atoned for in sheer fragrance of atmosphere and poetic charm. Mme. Vallin sings and is accompanied and recorded exquisitely; these two discs rank with such masterly folk settings as the Bartók and Kodály Hungarian and Roumanian tunes, and the Canteloube *Chants d'Auvergne*.

DICTION

Shakespeare: Hamlet—Four Excerpts. Maurice Evans. Incidental Music by Lehman Engel. 4 sides, 2-12" discs, Nos. C-11135/6D, in Set CM-340, price complete with album & text leaflet \$4.50.

Maurice Evans' scenes from *King Richard II* (CM-303, issued in September 1937) has been one of the most successful of all diction albums, and the current Evans production of *Hamlet* was obviously destined for gramophonic representation and equal if not greater popularity. The full-length Broadway version, that runs for some five hours, is beyond the limits of practicable recorded release, but here we have Mr. Evans in four of the greatest moments of the drama: *O that this too too solid flesh would melt*, Act I, Scene 2; *O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I*, Act II, Scene 2; *To be, or not to be, that is the question*,

Act III, Scene 1; *How all occasions do inform against me*, Act IV, Scene 4.

Such overwhelming and unanimous praise has been heaped on Maurice Evans' *Hamlet*, that the record reviewer's only function is to note that the recording itself is magnificently clear and open. Personally, I feel that Mr. Evans—for all his eloquence and vocal strength and beauty—is overly dramatic for purely gramophonic representation; I prefer productions, such as that of the C. B. S. Workshop *Air Raid* (reviewed last month), expressly designed for the microphone-loudspeaker medium. But no doubt it is the stage Evans-Hamlet that the public wants and if so they will not be disappointed in its vivid presentation here.

Shakespeare: The Merchant of Venice (Complete with Narrations). Orson Welles and Members of the Mercury Theatre Company. 24 sides, 12-12" Mercury Text Records, price complete with album & booklets \$18.00 (Parcel Post prepaid to any part of the U. S. A.).

Shakespeare: Twelfth Night (Complete with Dramatic Historical Prologue, Epilogue & Narrations). Orson Welles and Members of the Mercury Theatre Company. 20 sides, 10-12" Mercury Text Records, price complete with album & booklets \$15.00 (Parcel Post prepaid to any part of the U. S. A.).

Far more space than I have available would be required to do justice to this hefty pair of bright red, sturdily bound albums, first in a series of Orson Welles *Mercury Text Records*, recorded by Columbia, and produced in superbly lavish style. A notable feature is the inclusion of two handsomely printed (Todd Press) booklets by Mr. Welles and Roger Hill, one a Handbook for Teachers, the other an elaborate work that not only contains the text edited for reading and arranged for staging, but many introductory and descriptive notes, detailed drawings concerning the scenery, sets, costuming, and action—all presented in attractive, even exciting fashion. Today's and tomorrow's youngsters are fortunate indeed that they may meet Will Shakespeare and the living Elizabethan Drama through works like these.

But what I like best about the sets is the fact that throughout—the play itself, the narrations, the absorbing prologues and epilogues (part descriptive, part historical, but all as vivid and documentary as a March of Time newsreel)—the medium of microphone and loudspeaker is never forgotten, is always utilized to the maximum of its remarkable powers. The Mercury Text Records are good diction, good drama, excellent education, but more than that they are consistently lively entertainment. The breath of fresh air that Mr. Welles has brought to the stage and to the radio now reaches the gramophone and the full potentialities of discs as a dramatic medium are revealed for the first time. Mr. Welles is already overloaded with honors, but he wins another here, and in time it may prove to be one of the most significant of all.

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